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To: YMP_SR@ymp.gov
cc:

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SEP 12 2001

Subject: Possible Site Recommendation for Yucca Mountain

Part of Records Package / Supplement / Correction

September 12, 2001

Ms. Carol Hanlon
US Department of Energy
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office

re: Possible Site Recommendation for Yucca Mountain

Dear Ms. Hanlon:

I am offering a public comment on the subject of the possible recommendation of Yucca Mountain as a nuclear waste repository.

Regarding the PSSE and other scientific documents produced by the Department of Energy: I have not reviewed these. But as a trained scientist (I have a PhD in physical chemistry, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1984), I am aware of the inadequacy of science to consider all possible effects that storage of nuclear wastes at one site might cause. I do know that smaller quantities of nuclear materials are safer than larger quantities. This fact alone suggests that the public safety is better assured under the present system of many small repositories than by one large one at Yucca Mountain.

One aspect that I believe is not addressed by the documents is the transport of wastes to the Yucca Mountain site. I live two blocks from I-70 in the St. Louis area. This part of I-70 is expected to be the route of many waste-bearing trucks. It is inevitable that accidents will occur and that those accidents will scatter nuclear material around the accident site. I feel personally threatened by this proposal, and I am concerned that millions of other people are also threatened. Leaving the wastes where they are now eliminates this threat of nuclear contamination.

I believe the Secretary should recommend AGAINST the Yucca Mountain site, for the reasons I stated above and those stated by many other people not connected with DOE or with the nuclear industry who have made public comments and statements.

The best way for the Department to meet its legal obligation surrounding the acceptance of spent nuclear fuel and wastes is to accept responsibility for caring for them at their current sites. This could include citizen monitoring and oversight at those sites. Joanna Macy suggested this several years ago. It could be a Peace Corps or service project for youth

and adults and could include time to study nuclear issues from technical, social, and cultural viewpoints from a variety of perspectives. Please study Joanna's many writings to learn more about this. It is possible that people engaged in this kind of study could develop safe methods to deactivate the spent fuel and wastes. I highly recommend this as the best possible long-term option from a scientific, social, and cultural viewpoint.

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Finally, DOE and the entire government must immediately commit to stop all use of nuclear fuel and nuclear weapons. Safe, long-term storage of these materials is simply not possible. Hence, we need to close all nuclear power plants and decommission all nuclear weapons, and commit to no further construction of either. Only critical uses of nuclear materials for medical purposes should be allowed, and even for these research must begin into non-nuclear alternatives. There is no safe use of nuclear materials. The sooner we accept this scientific, social, and cultural truth and act on our acceptance of it, the better off all of us will be.

Sincerely,
Claire L. Schosser, PhD
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